

Broccoli

History

Broccoli has been growing for over 2,000 years and was a favorite vegetable of the Romans. It originally was grown in the eastern Mediterranean region. Broccoli was not introduced to North American soil until the 1900s when Italian immigrants planted it in their family gardens in New York. In the late 1920s Italian immigrants in northern California began planting broccoli to sell commercially. Today, California produces over 90 percent of the United States broccoli crop. Other states that grow broccoli include Wisconsin, Ohio, Arizona, Maine, Washington, Colorado, Oregon, Texas, and Florida. With growers across the nation, fresh broccoli is available in grocery stores throughout the year.



Varieties

Calabrese broccoli is the most common variety of broccoli found in the United States. It was first grown in the Calabria region of Italy. It is also known as the “Italian Green.”

Broccoli Rabe (pronounced ROB) is another type of broccoli that is grown in the Mediterranean region of the world. This type of broccoli has thinner stalks and a much stronger flavor than the Calabrese variety and is very popular in Italian cuisine.

Broccolini is also called baby broccoli. It is a cross between Chinese kale and Calabrese broccoli, but it looks like asparagus stalks with a broccoli head. It is smaller and sweeter than regular broccoli.

Fun Facts

- Broccoli heads are made up of little buds that are ready to flower
- Broccoli is a cruciferous vegetable. It is called this because the flowers have four petals and resemble a Greek cross
- Broccoli is related to cauliflower, kale, cabbage, turnips, rutabagas, Brussels sprouts, and Chinese cabbage
- Broccoli comes from the Latin word “brachium” which means “branch” or “arm”
- Over 30,000 broccoli plants can grow on one acre of land
- If broccoli is not harvested in time, it will turn into a head of yellow flowers
- Broccoli is a great source of vitamin C, which helps to keep our immune system strong
- Broccoli is a good source of vitamin K (for our blood) and vitamin A (for our eyes and skin)



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